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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2291
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2336
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1085
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0164
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0647
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0197

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 000611

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS (EMERY, SCHEIBE)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/19/2018

TAGS: [BM](#) [LA](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: LAO MINIMALIST RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE ON BURMA
CRACKDOWN

REF: SECSTATE 121418

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Peter Haymond for reasons 1.4 (B and D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: A/DCM delivered reftel demarche to MFA ASEAN Department Deputy Director General Kham-Inh Khitchadeth. He acknowledged the longstanding problems presented by Burma but pointed out that the "ASEAN approach" to dealing with problems -- including the principle of non-interference -- limited possible actions. Still he said the situation in Burma would be an important element of discussion at the upcoming ASEAN Summit. DDG Kham-Inh promised to pass the demarche information to his superiors for consideration. End summary.

¶2. (C) A/DCM delivered reftel points to ASEAN DDG Kham-Inh on 11/20. DDG Kham-Inh said that ASEAN has worked to encourage the government in Burma to resolve its longstanding political problems and added that these new problems will also be considered. Kham-Inh was surprised at the 59 arrests in the last two weeks and asked about the source of this information. He understood the implications to the focus of the upcoming ASEAN Summit of this new wave of crackdowns in Burma and promised that the situation in Burma would be raised during the Summit deliberations. However he also pointed to the need to avoid "pushing Burma into a corner." Kham-Inh raised the 2010 election as one possible solution, but A/DCM highlighted that an election held with more than 2000 regime opponents incarcerated would be widely viewed as a sham -- a point Kham-Inh clearly understood. Although UN voting is the focus of MFA's International Organizations Department, Kham-Inh advised that Lao would be unlikely to vote against a no-action motion on the UNGA Third Committee resolution on Burma or in favor of stronger language in the resolution. Still, he promised to take our concerns to his superiors and share them with his colleagues in the other Departments involved in Burma issues (International Organizations for UN-related issues and the Asia, Pacific, and Africa Department for bilateral issues).

¶3. (C) COMMENT: As DDG Kham-Inh made clear, there is little likelihood that Laos will break ranks at the UNGA Third Committee. Nor will Laos take the lead in pressing moderation by the Burma regime. Laos is, however, increasingly involved in ASEAN affairs -- he asked at the end of the meeting about the possibility of U.S. training to help Laos be better prepared to take on the ASEAN Chair in 2115 -- and the continuing drag of the Burma issue on ASEAN as an institution appeared to make DDG Kham-Inh uncomfortable.

HAYMOND